

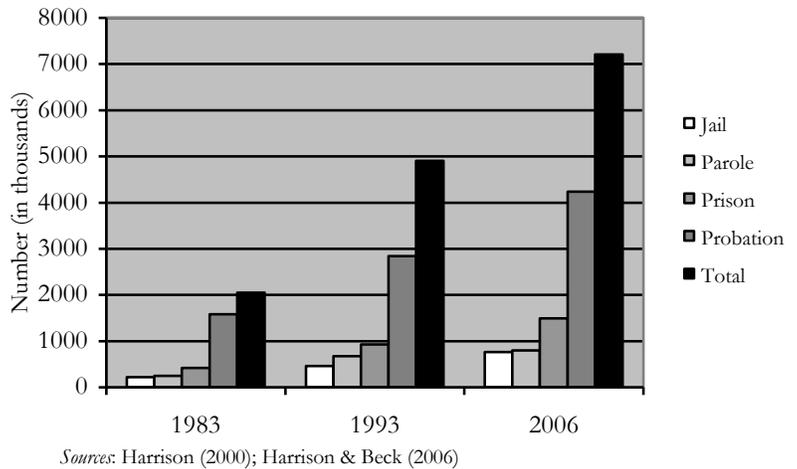
The Current State of Correctional Education
Paper to be presented at the Reentry Roundtable on Education

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Introduction

The number of people living in correctional facilities across the country has reached unprecedented levels, leading some scholars to refer to the current period in correctional policy as the era of “mass imprisonment” (Garland 2001). Between 1983 and 2006 the total number of people under correctional supervision in the United States (U.S.) more than tripled, increasing from 2,052,938 to 7,211,400. These figures translate to a per capita rate of 878 per 100,000 in 1983 to 2,409 per 100,000 in 2006 (Harrison 2000; Glaze & Bonczar 2007; U.S. Census 2006). The growth of the correctional population is attributable in large part to increases in the number of people sentenced to probation and parole. From 1980 to 2006 the community correctional population expanded from 338,535 to over five million, an increase of nearly 1,400 percent (Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics Online; Glaze & Bonczar 2007).

Figure 1: U.S. Correctional Population, 1983-2006



In 1973, 204,211 (96 per 100,000) people were incarcerated in the U.S. (BJS n.d.) in state and federal prisons. By yearend 2006, the U.S. prison population had increased 669 percent, with 1,570,861 people housed in state and federal prisons, translating to a per capita incarceration rate of 501 per 100,000 (Sabol, Couture, & Harrison 2007). If the jail population is included (766,010 people at yearend 2006), the per capita incarceration rate increases to 751 per 100,000 and the incarcerated population totals 2,258,983 (Ibid). A more recent report indicates that one in every 100 adults in the United States is currently incarcerated in a prison or jail (The PEW Center on the States 2008).

Table 1: Growth of Incarcerated Population

Yearend	1973	2006
Total State and Federal Prison Population	204,211	1,570,861
Rate per 100,000 People	96	501
Total Prison and Jail Population	338,029*	2,258,983
Rate per 100,000 People (including Jail Population)	166*	751

*Based on population numbers from 1970 (Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice 2002)

When looking at the extraordinary increase in the number of men and women incarcerated in the

United States, one cannot help but think that we have forgotten the persistent reality – the “iron law of imprisonment” (Travis 2005 p. xvii) – that, except for those who die in prison, all prisoners will one day return to our communities. In 2005, over 690,000 men and women were released from state and federal prisons (Sabol, Minton, & Harrison 2006). Furthermore, it is estimated that over nine million people cycle in and out of local jails every year (Solomon & Osborne 2006).

In recent years, scholars have estimated the number of formerly incarcerated men and women living in the United States (see Bonczar 2003; Pettit & Western 2004). The most recent estimates indicate there are approximately four million people – 1.86 percent of the adult population – living in the U.S. who have served time in a correctional facility (Uggen, Manza, & Thompson 2006). Moreover, it is estimated that there are 16 million people – 7.47 percent of the adult population – living in the United States who have been convicted of a felony. The exorbitant number of people experiencing contact with the criminal justice system has stretched the budgets of correctional departments and raised public safety concerns among policy makers and correctional officials, causing an increased interest in providing incarcerated people with the skills needed to facilitate their successful transition to the mainstream of society.

Since the establishment of prison as a form of punishment, education has been a consistent resource provided to men and women behind bars. The majority of people incarcerated in the United States come from disadvantaged communities and situations where their educational opportunities are limited. Anecdotal evidence suggests that for many prisoners and formerly incarcerated people, the opportunity to obtain an education – particularly a college education – would not have been realized had they not been incarcerated. Prisoners and formerly incarcerated individuals recognize the utility of an education help their transition into society. In fact, a recent report from the National Institute of Justice (Visher & Lattimore 2006) states that additional education was cited by formerly incarcerated people as their most common reentry need.

Development of Correctional Education in the United States

The importance of prisoner education in the United States has been recognized for over 200 years. Educational programs were introduced in the first prison in the United States – Walnut Street Jail – in 1798 (Coley & Barton 2006). The first schools in prisons were known as “Sabbath schools” and focused on moral and religious instruction (Gehring 1997). Despite initial support garnered by correctional education, support for such programs changed as the philosophy of punishment shifted from rehabilitation to crime control. By the 1820s, state legislative members began to argue that prisons had become too lenient. Thus, correctional education fell out of favor. Sentiments shifted again at the end of the 19th century alongside the rise in popularity of the Reformatory model that emphasized education and training. Secular courses such as history, astronomy, geography, physiology, and physical education became incorporated into correctional education (Ibid).

The 1970s are often considered the “Golden Age” of correctional education (Ryan & McCabe 1994, p. 451). During this period, education was regarded as the most important tool for successful rehabilitation. Adult Basic Education (ABE) and General Education Development (GED) programs flourished alongside vocational training programs and postsecondary academic programs. However, by the 1980s support among the public and policy makers for correctional education once again waned and funding for education in prison suffered dramatic cuts (Lillis 1994). Despite recent support for basic education and skill development, public backing for postsecondary

education has wavered. From the 1970s through the early 1990s, a strong college presence existed in prisons across the country. However, providing prisoners the opportunity to earn a college degree was seen by many as rewarding individuals who were undeserving. Lack of public support and the fear of appearing soft on crime led Congress to eliminate prisoner eligibility for Federal Pell educational grants as part of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994. Within one year of eliminating Pell Grant access to prisoners, participation in postsecondary correctional education programs dropped 44 percent (Marks 1997).

Whereas the primary focus of correctional education programs has always been literacy and basic skills, most recently, programs have expanded to include cognitive skill development and job preparation (Steurer 2001). Today, the term “correctional education” encompasses a wide variety of programs available to men and women under correctional supervision. At one end of the correctional education continuum are programs designed to develop basic skills needed to function in everyday life. On the other end of the continuum are college and vocational training programs that provide prisoners with the opportunity to acquire the skills needed to obtain employment upon release as well as broaden the individual’s life perspective and self-esteem (see Fine et al. 2001). For the purposes of this paper, correctional education includes the following types of programs: Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Secondary Education, vocational education, college coursework, special education, study release, and life-skills/competency-based education. Below is a brief description of each type education program.¹

- Adult Basic Education (ABE): Basic skills training in arithmetic, reading, writing, and English as a Second Language (ESL).
- Adult Secondary Education: Instruction for the GED tests or another certificate of high school equivalency.
- Vocational Education: Training to prepare individuals for general positions of employment as well as skills for specific jobs and/or industries. Vocational training aims to provide the skills needed to secure and retain gainful employment upon release.
- College Coursework: Advanced instruction that allows individuals to earn college credit which may be applied toward an Associate, Bachelor, or Master degree.
- Special Education: Educational training designed for individuals who have learning differences.
- Study Release: Release of prisoners for participation in coursework or training offered outside of the prison or jail.
- Life Skills/Competency-Based Education: Wide variety of programs that focus on providing individuals with communication skills, job and financial skills development, education, interpersonal and family relationship development, as well as stress and anger management (U.S. Department of Education 2006, p. 10).

Mandatory Correctional Education

The incarcerated population in the U.S. has been called the “most educationally disadvantaged population in the United States” (Klein, Tolbert, Bugarin, Cataldi, & Tauschek 2004, p. 1). Basic skills, such as reading, writing, and math, are necessary to function in everyday life. Recognition of

¹ Unless noted, definitions in this section are adapted from Klein, Tolbert, Bugarin, Cataldi, & Tauschek (2004).

the importance of such skills and a belief that education facilitates successful reentry has led many jurisdictions to require prisoners to participate in an education program if they have not already achieved a certain education level. According to a survey conducted in 2002, 22 of the 50 states – 44 percent – and the Federal government have adopted legislation or implemented policy requiring mandatory education for prisoners (McGlone 2002). In these jurisdictions, education is “mandatory” in that the prisoner is required to participate in an education program for a certain period of time if he or she has not achieved a determined level of education. After the compulsory period passes, the prisoner has the option to withdraw from the education program.

Mandatory education programs were first introduced in 1982 when the Federal Bureau of Prisons adopted a policy that required prisoners who functioned below a sixth grade level to participate in ABE for 90 days (Jenkins 2002). Within 10 years, 13 states had adopted mandatory education policies and this number increased to 21 states by 1996 (Ibid). The level of achievement and the required length of participation vary across jurisdiction. A recent survey of mandatory correctional education in the United States found that of the 22 mandatory states, 10 require GED participation while other states require sixth grade achievement (McGlone 2002). Both voluntary and mandatory participation states use GED completion as an incentive for early parole release or as a requirement for job advancement within the prison; however, GED completion is not a requirement for release in any jurisdiction (Ibid).

The logic behind mandatory education policies is that by introducing education to the prisoner, he or she will develop a desire for future participation. However, some argue against mandatory education participation raising the objection that coercive participation “results in poorer performance than volunteer participation” (Jenkins 2002 p. 9). These scholars believe that prisoners must *want* to participate in order for the program to be effective (DiVito 1991). However, studies have indicated that educational achievement in mandatory participation programs is effective in facilitating educational attainment (Ryan & McCabe 1994; Greenfield as cited in Jenkins 2002).²

Education Level of the Incarcerated Population

Educational Attainment

Recent findings suggest that individuals living in our nation’s prisons are slightly more educated than they were nearly a decade ago. Moreover, the gap in educational attainment between the prison population and general population appears to be narrowing. In 1997, 41.3 percent of state and federal prisoners had achieved less than a high school education (Harlow 2003).³ At that time only 18 percent of the general population age 18 and over had achieved less than a high school education (Harlow 2003). A more recent analysis of data collected by the Bureau of Justice Statistics in 2004 indicates that 34.4 percent of individuals in state and federal prisons had attained less than a high

² Ryan and McCabe (1994) found support for mandatory education policies in their analysis of educational records from the South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice. Controlling for sex, race, age, education level, IQ, and type of participant (mandatory versus voluntary), they found significant differences in academic achievement and the type of participation (mandatory versus voluntary) (Ibid). Greenfield (as cited in Jenkins 2002) reached similar conclusions, reporting that the academic achievement of prisoners who were required to “participate in correctional education is equal to or greater than the academic progress of voluntary students” (p. 10).

³ Unless noted “less than high school education” is defined as not having earned a high school diploma or a GED.

school education (BJS 2007). The National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL),⁴ conducted in 2003, reports that 19 percent of the general population age 16 and over had less than a high school education (Greenberg, Dunleavy, & Kutner 2007).⁵ There is also a large disparity between the prison population and general population in terms of learning differences. Approximately 17 percent of adult prisoners have been diagnosed with some type of learning difference compared to six percent of the general adult population (Ibid).

Table 2: Educational Attainment of Incarcerated and General Adult Populations (Percentages)

Educational Attainment	Total Incarcerated Population		Federal Prisoners		State Prisoners		General Population	
	1997	2004	1997	2004	1997	2004	1997	2003*
Some high school or less	41.3	34.4	26.5	25.9	39.7	36.6	18.4	19.0
GED	23.4	31.2	22.7	28.8	28.5	32.1	n/a	5.0
High school diploma	22.6	16.5	27.0	17.0	20.5	16.5	33.2	26.0
Postsecondary	12.7	17.0	23.9	27.3	11.4	14.4	48.4	51.0

* Data from the NAAL

Sources: Harlow (2003); BJS (2007); and Greenberg, Dunleavy, & Kutner (2007)

When looking at the other end of the educational continuum – postsecondary educational achievement – even more striking disparities between the prison and general population exist. In 1997, 12.7 percent of the state and federal prison population had attained some level of postsecondary education compared to 48.4 percent of the general adult population (Harlow 2003). Seven years later, the rate of postsecondary attainment had increased to 17 percent (BJS 2007). Comparatively, the NAAL reports that in 2003, 51 percent of the general population had received some level of postsecondary education (Greenberg, Dunleavy, & Kutner 2007).

While the data discussed above regarding postsecondary education achievement is interesting and important to the current conversation, perhaps more compelling are the trends occurring with the prison population and GED achievement, compared both across time and with the general adult population. As indicated in Table 2, between 1997 and 2004, the percentage of prisoners who obtained a GED increased nearly 10 percent, 23.4 percent compared to 31.2 percent. This jump is mirrored in findings from the NAAL. In 1992, 17 percent of the adult prison population had obtained a GED or high school equivalency certificate and by 2003 that number had risen to 28 percent (Greenberg, Dunleavy, & Kutner 2007). According to these two data sources, the GED is increasingly becoming the vehicle by which prisoners obtain a “high school” education. Moreover, most incarcerated people do not earn their GED prior to their imprisonment. In 1997 and 2004, seven in 10 state and federal prisoners who had earned their GED did so while in prison (Harlow 2003; BJS 2007).

⁴ Individuals who were classified as not literate in English who were not able to or refused to complete the background survey weren’t included in the NAAL sample. Additionally, individuals who could not be tested because of cognitive or mental disabilities were not included in the analysis. The latter caveat means that those who could not read could have been omitted from the study.

⁵ Of the 19 percent of individuals in the general population who had less than a high school education, three percent were still enrolled in high school.

Literacy Levels

The NAAL, last conducted in 2003, measured the literacy levels of adults in prisons (ages 18 and over) and adults living in the general population (ages 16 and over). Individuals were measured on three different literacy scales: prose, document, and quantitative. The prose literacy scale measures an individual's ability to perform prose tasks such as the ability to search, understand, and use information from various types of continuous texts including newspaper articles and instructional materials. The document literacy scale measures the individual's ability to search, understand, and use information from continuous texts including job applications, maps, transportation schedules, and food labels. Finally, quantitative literacy measures an individual's ability to perform computations such as balancing a checkbook and calculating a tip. Individuals were scored on four different levels, ranging from below basic to proficient.

Table 3: Levels of Literacy Used by the National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL)

Level of Literacy Definition	Key Abilities
Below Basic: has no more than the most simple literacy skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nonliterate in English • Prose: able to locate easily identifiable information in short, commonplace texts • Document: able to locate easily identifiable information and to follow simple instructions in documents • Quantitative: able to locate and use numbers to perform simple mathematical computations (usually addition)
Basic: has the skills necessary to perform simple and everyday literacy tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prose: able to read and understand information in short, commonplace texts • Document: able to read and understand information in simple documents • Quantitative: able to locate and use numbers to solve simple, one-step computations when the operation (i.e. multiplication, division, addition, subtraction) is easily inferred
Intermediate: has the skills necessary to perform moderately challenging literacy activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prose: able to read, understand, summarize, infer information from moderately dense texts while also able to determine cause and effect and determine the author's purpose • Document: able to locate and infer information in dense, complex documents • Quantitative: able to locate and use less familiar information to solve problems when the operation is not easily inferred
Proficient: has the skills needed to perform complex and challenging literacy activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prose: able to read and synthesize information from lengthy, complicated texts • Document: able to understand, analyze and synthesize information from complex documents • Quantitative: able to locate and use abstract information to solve multiple step operations where the operation is not easily inferred

Source: Adapted from Greenberg, Dunleavy, & Kutner (2007, p. 4)

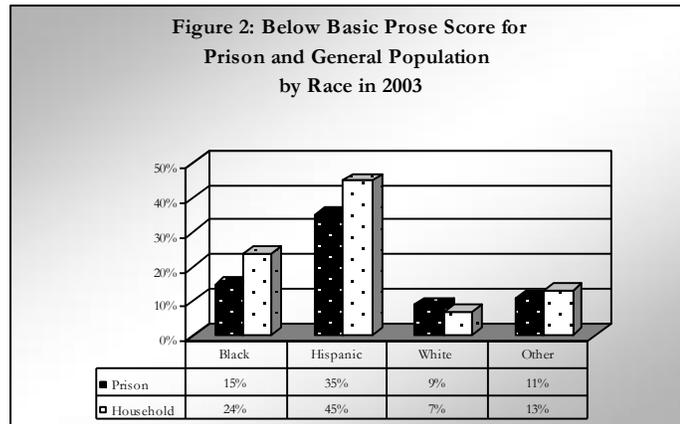
Moreover, the most recent NAAL indicates that literacy levels of prisoners are quite low compared to the general population on each literacy scale – prose, document and quantitative literacy. However, Black and Hispanic adult prisoners have higher average prose literacy than Black and Hispanic adults living in the general population. Interestingly, Black adult prisoners with a high school diploma or GED/high school equivalency certificate or less had higher literacy scores on all scales than Black adults living in the general population.

Adult Prison Population Compared to the Adult General Population, 2003

The findings of the 2003 NAAL indicate significant differences in literacy levels between adults in prison and adults living in the general population. Approximately 39 percent of adult prisoners have

below basic quantitative literacy compared to only 21 percent of the adult general population (Greenberg, Dunleavy, & Kutner 2007). The difference between the prisoner population and general population is even more striking when comparing rates of proficiency. Specifically, only two to three percent of adult prisoners had proficient prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores compared to 13 to 14 percent of the general adult population (Ibid).

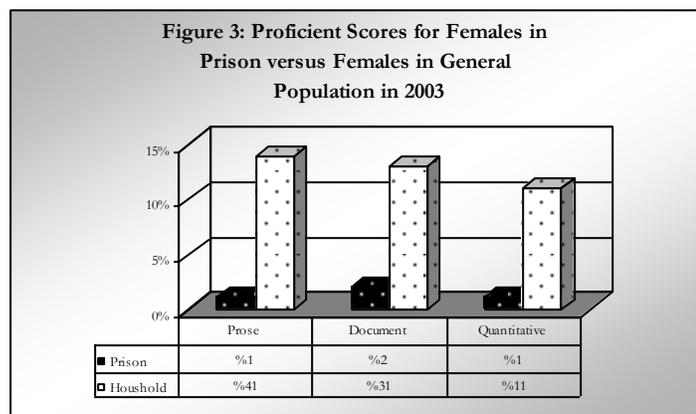
The differences between the prison population and the general population are very interesting when the populations are broken down by race. For example, a smaller percent of Black and Hispanic prisoners – 15 percent and 35 percent, respectively – had a score of below basic for prose literacy than the general adult population – 24 percent and 45 percent, respectively; unlike the case for white prisoners (see Figure 2) (Greenberg, Dunleavy, & Kutner 2007). This finding indicates that Black and Hispanic adult prisoners have a higher rate of prose literacy than Black and Hispanic adults in the general population.



Source: Greenberg, Dunleavy, & Kutner (2007)

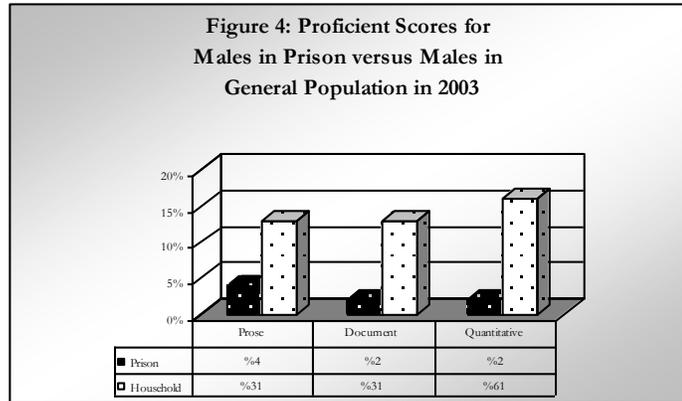
Breaking the NAAL findings down by gender also yields significant outcomes. Considerable differences between the male and female adult prison population and the male and female general adult population were found at the below basic level for quantitative literacy. Specifically, 39 percent of the male prison population scored below basic quantitative literacy compared to 21 percent of the male general population (Greenberg, Dunleavy, & Kutner 2007). The difference for females was even larger as 47 percent of the female prison population scored below basic quantitative literacy compared to 22 percent of the female general population (Ibid). Both males and females in the general adult population were significantly more likely to score at the proficient level in each literacy category measured than males and females in the adult prison population.

The differences in literacy between the adult prison population and the adult general population by gender were also significant at the proficient level for all three literacy scales. As indicated in Figure 3 female adults in the general population were much more likely to score at a proficient level on all three literacy scales than the female prison population (Greenberg, Dunleavy, & Kutner 2007). Only one to two percent of the female adult prison population scored at the proficient level compared to 11 to 14 percent of the females in the general population (Ibid).



Source: Greenberg, Dunleavy, & Kutner (2007)

The same can be said for adult males in prison compared to adult males in the general population. On every literacy scale, males in the general population were more likely to score at the proficient level than males in the adult prison population. Specifically, only two to four percent of the adult male prison population scored at a proficient level compared to 13 to 16 percent of the general adult population (see Figure 4) (Greenberg, Dunleavy, & Kutner 2007).

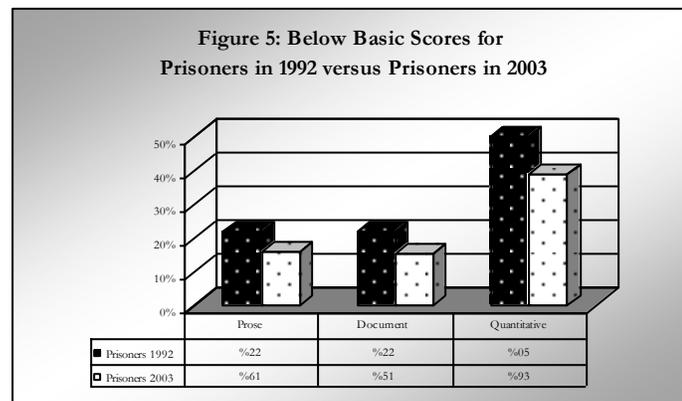


Source: Greenberg, Dunleavy, & Kutner (2007)

Adult Prison Population in 1992 Compared to the Adult Prison Population in 2003

The 2003 NAAL also provides a comparison in literacy rates between the adult prison population in 1992 and the adult prison population in 2003. Overall, the adult prison population in 2003 was better educated than the adult prison population in 1992. For example, in 2003, a lower percentage of prisoners ended their education before completing high school than did in 1992. Between 1992 and 2003 there were significant increases in average prose, document, and quantitative literacy for Black adult prisoners. However, white prisoners did not experience any significant increases in literacy scores, causing the gap between literacy score for Black prisoners and white prisoners to narrow.

In both 1992 and 2003, between two and three percent of prisoners scored proficient on all three literacy scales (Greenberg, Dunleavy, & Kutner 2007). However, there were significant changes in the percentage of adult prisoners who scored at the below basic level. Overall, a higher percentage of adult prisoners in 1992 scored at the below basic literacy on all three scales than did in 2003 (see Figure 5). The largest reduction was on the quantitative scale where 50 percent of adult prisoners scored at the below basic level in 1992 compared to 39 percent in 2003 (Ibid).

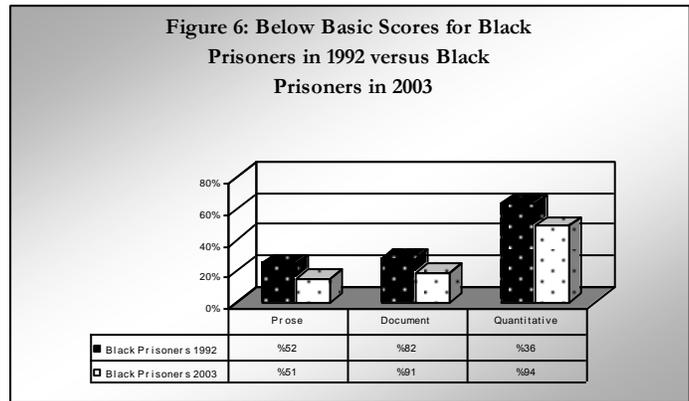


Source: Greenberg, Dunleavy, & Kutner (2007)

Both Hispanic and Black adult prisoners experienced a significant decrease in the percentage of people scoring at the below basic literacy between 1992 and 2003. This trend contrasts with the experience of white adult prisoners. As indicated in Figure 6 the percentage of Black adult prisoners who scored below basic for all three literacy scales decreased significantly between 1992 and 2003. Additionally, 64 percent of Hispanic adult prisoners in 1992 scored below basic quantitative literacy compared to 53 percent in 2003 (Greenberg, Dunleavy, & Kutner 2007). While the percentage of white adult prisoners who scored at the below basic level also decreased during this time, the

changes were not statistically significant. Specifically, there was a three percent reduction in prose literacy, a five percent reduction in document literacy, and an eight percent reduction in quantitative literacy (Ibid).

Like Black adult prisoners, male adult prisoners also experienced a significant decrease in the percentage scoring below basic literacy on all three scales, most notably on the quantitative scale. In 1992, 49 percent of adult male prisoners scored at the below basic level compared to 39 percent in 2003 (Greenberg, Dunleavy, & Kutner 2007).



Source: Greenberg, Dunleavy, & Kutner (2007)

Availability of Correctional Education Programs

In 2000, 89 percent of prisons in the United States (state, federal and private) offered some type of education program (Stephan & Karberg 2003). A large portion – 80 percent – provided adult secondary education, 76 percent provided ABE programs and 54 percent provided vocational training. Federal prisons provided more educational opportunities to prisoners, not only the percentage of facilities offering educational programs – 91.7 percent compared to 90.3 percent of state and 80.3 percent of private prisons – but also in education level. Seventy-four percent of federal prisons provided college education opportunities compared to 26 percent of state prisons and 25 percent of private prisons (Ibid).

However, as shown in Table 4, the percentage of federal facilities offering education programs decreased slightly between 1995 and 2000. This is not true for state facilities. Between 1995 and 2000, the percentage of state prisoners offering education programs increased by nearly five percent. The greatest increase occurred in the percentage of facilities offering ABE and special education, an increase of 6.1 percent for both types of programs. College was the only category in state facilities that experienced a drop between 1995 and 2000, from 30.5 percent to 26.4 percent.

Table 4: Education Programs Offered in State, Federal, and Private Correctional Facilities (Percentages)

	Federal		State		Private
	1995	2000	1995	2000	2000
With Education Programs	96.8	91.7	86.5	90.3	80.3
Adult Basic Education	85.6	89.3	73.5	79.6	56.4
Secondary/GED	92.8	90.5	78.5	82.8	64.8
Special Education	32.8	54.8	33.1	39.2	20.1
Vocational Training	68.0	85.7	52.4	55.2	40.5
College	63.2	73.8	30.5	26.4	25.0
Study Release	8.8	6.0	10.9	7.6	26.5
Life Skills/Community Adjustment	80.0	89.3	65.4	68.3	79.5

Sources: Stephan & Karberg (2003); Stephan (1997)

Participation in Education Programs

Despite the large percentage of facilities that offer educational opportunities to prisoners, participation rates in correctional education programs have not grown alongside the exploding prison population. Western, Schiraldi, and Ziedenberg (2003) state that in 1991, 57 percent of State prisoners reported participating in education programs. At that time, the prison population was approximately 792,535. By 1997, the number of prisoners who reported participating in correctional education programs dropped to 52 percent while the prison population had grown to 1,176,564 (Ibid).

In 1997, a large portion – nearly 52 percent of state and 56 percent of federal prisoners – reported participating in education programs while incarcerated (Harlow 2003). The majority of prisoners who participated did so in vocational and high school/GED programs. Thirty-one percent of federal prisoners and approximately 32 percent of state prisoners participated in vocational programs and roughly 23 percent of prisoners in both federal and state systems participated in high school/GED programs (Ibid). Participation in college courses was much lower for both federal and state prisoners – 13 percent and 10 respectively (Ibid).

A more recent survey of prisoners conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics indicates that the percentage of prisoners participating in education programs has decreased since 1997 (see Table 5). This is true for both state and federal institutions and each type of education program. The greatest drop in participation was seen in GED/high school programs and vocational programs in state facilities. In 1997, 32.2 percent of State prisoners reported to have participated in a vocational program. By 2004, that percentage had dropped slightly to 27 percent. Similarly, in 1997, 23.4 percent of state prisoners reported having participated in a GED/high school program, by 2004, the percentage had dropped to 19.2 percent. Unfortunately, there is no way to determine if the reduction in participation is due to the unavailability of programs, long waiting lists, or prisoners opting not to participate.

Table 5: Participation in Correctional Education Programs in State and Federal Facilities (Percentages)

Education Program	Federal			State		
	1991	1997	2004	1991	1997	2004
Basic	10.4	1.9	1.5	5.3	3.1	2.1
GED/High School	27.3	23.0	21.1	27.3	23.4	19.2
College Courses	18.9	12.9	10.1	13.9	9.9	7.3
English as a Second Language	-	5.7	2.3	-	1.2	1.0
Vocational	29.4	31.0	30.8	31.2	32.2	27.0
Life Skills/Community Adjustment	-	-	28.6	-	-	24.3

Sources: Harlow (2003); BJS (2007)

Directors of correctional education programs have indicated that on average, 41 percent of the prisoner population is eligible to enroll in postsecondary correctional education programming; however, only 10 percent of those eligible participate (Tewksbury, Erickson, & Taylor 2000). It is unclear whether choice or insufficient funding and/or capacity explain the disparity between eligibility and participation rates. Legislation in certain states, Maryland as one example, has been

proposed to reduce long waiting lists for correctional education programming. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2003, Maryland reported having a correctional education waiting list of over 2,000 prisoners (Maryland General Assembly 2003). If other states have waiting lists similar to Maryland's, insufficient capacity may be the primary explanation for the gap between eligibility and program enrollment.

Completion Rates

When analyzing correctional education, comparisons are often made between the prison population and the general population. However, some correctional education administrators argue it is not appropriate to compare retention and participation of prisoners with those in the community. Some prison training programs have higher levels of participation and retention than those in the community (personal correspondence, John Linton; Spangenberg 2004). However, transfers, security lockdowns, and other factors can impact the completion of correctional education programming.

A 50-State survey by the Institute for Higher Education Policy provides some completion statistics for postsecondary education programs (Erisman & Contardo 2005). The report found that during the 2003-04 academic year, postsecondary programming was only offered to 85,000 prisoners, less than five percent of the U.S. prison population. According to the report, 15 prison systems accounted for 90 percent of the prisoners enrolled in postsecondary programming. These 15 prison systems also accounted for 96 percent of all the degrees and certificates awarded to prisoners nationwide. Moreover, of those individuals earning a credential, 92 percent received a vocational certificate (Ibid). Therefore, the total number of prisoners earning college degrees appears to be very small.

Models of Delivery

Correctional education takes many forms. Instruction may occur on-site, through distance learning programs, and through linkages with community colleges and other community-based organizations. On-site models typically involve teachers and/or volunteers entering the correctional facility to conduct lessons. Some programs also utilize prisoners to provide peer instruction to other prisoners.

Distance learning programs are often coordinated through an educational institution that is located outside of the correctional institution. Correspondence courses are mainly conducted via U.S. mail; however, some correctional facilities are exploring alternative mediums for distance instruction including the use of the Intranet. The use of such technology is a cost effective approach and is sensitive to the scheduling and safety concerns present in many correctional institutions.

The fields of education in general and correctional education specifically have experienced a great deal of growth with the increasing development and use of computer software, most of which is in the field of GED preparation (personal correspondence, John Linton). Computer software in some instances is supplanting traditional classroom instruction; however, computer technology more commonly serves as a tutoring tool and other types of in-class or out-of-class exercises (Ibid). Satellite television has also been utilized as a medium for correctional education.

Community colleges also engage in partnerships with correctional facilities and/or departments in order to provide on-site instruction. Moreover, under study release conditions, individuals may exit the correctional facility for class instruction at a nearby educational institution (i.e. community college or training center).

Private colleges and private training providers are essential in the service delivery of correctional education. Considering the restrictions on Pell Grants and other sources of public funding, private institutions may be even more vital in providing postsecondary instruction to prisoners.

Education and Individuals in Jails

Very limited information exists regarding correctional education among the jail population. The available data is dated and collection has not kept pace with the rapid growth of the U.S. jail population. In 2006 a total of 766,010 individuals were under jail supervision (Sabol, Minton, & Harrison 2007), representing an increase of 160,076 – over 26 percent – since 1999 (Beck 2000).

Very few changes have been observed between the reported educational levels of jail inmates in 1989, 1996, and 2002 (see Table 6). Similar to the NAAL findings of state prison populations, a slight increase in the educational levels of jail inmates has occurred over the last decade. Unfortunately, the NAAL administrators did not include jails in their evaluation (personal correspondence, John Linton). Future analyses of the U.S. correctional education status would be greatly benefited by the inclusion of the jail population in the NAAL census. It is important to analyze the differences between the prison, jail, and household populations.

Table 6: Education Level of the U.S. Jail Population (Percentages)

Education Level	1989	1996	2002
8 th grade or less	15.6	13.1	12.3
Some high school	38.2	33.4	31.6
High school graduate/GED	33.2	40.0	43.0
Some college or more	13.1	13.5	13.0

Sources: Harlow (2003) & James (2003)

Harlow (2003) reports that 46.6 percent of people housed in local jails in 1996 did not complete high school or earn a GED. Over 15 percent of those who did not complete high school reported they dropped out of school because they had been convicted of a crime, sent to a correctional institution, or were somehow involved in criminal activities. Almost 35 percent of the jail population reported they dropped out of school because they were having academic or behavioral problems or they generally lost interest in school (Harlow 2003).

In 1999, local jails reported they provided a number of educational programs (see Table 7). Given that the majority of people housed in local jails have not completed high school, it is no surprise that over half of jails reported providing ABE and secondary educational opportunities. However, providing meaningful education and training to the jail population is difficult due to short and unpredictable periods of incarceration. For example, only 33 percent of individuals are held in jail for more than one month (Beck 2006). Short stays might be responsible for the low rates of participation in correctional education in 1996 when only 14.1 percent of people housed in local jails participated in an educational program. Specifically, individuals housed in local jails participated in ABE (0.8 percent), GED or high school program (8.6 percent), college courses (1 percent),

vocational training (4.8 percent), and other correctional education programs (2.1 percent) (Harlow 2003).

Table 7: Number and Percent of Jails Providing Educational Programs in 1999 Population

Type of Education Program	Number	Percent
ABE	697	24.7
Secondary Education	1,546	54.8
Special Education	304	10.8
Vocational Training	183	6.5
College Courses	95	3.4
Study Release	261	9.3
No Education Assignments	1,118	39.7
Total Number of Individuals Participating in Educational Programs	47,519	7.8

Sources: Harlow (2003), Stephen (2001), & Beck (2000)

Rikers Island and Participation Incentive

New York City (NYC) is home to the second largest jail in the country, Rikers Island. Educational programs offered at Rikers Island are provided through the NYC Department of Education Alternative Schools division and include ABE/pre-GED, GED, ESL, and vocational training. Vocational training includes certification programs that provide hours towards certificates such as asbestos removal, building maintenance, barbering, and culinary arts.⁶ New York City requires mandatory educational participation up to a certain level. Detainees and sentenced prisoners are subject to this mandate; however, educational services are rarely provided to the detainee population.

The education programs at Rikers Island are largely funded through New York State (NYS) funds awarded through a reimbursement formula based on the number of students served and the number of contact hours provided in the prior fiscal year. In Fiscal Year 2008, Rikers Island received a total of \$460,000 of state dollars for correctional education. This funding is available through the Governor’s Employment Preparation Education (EPE) program, which provides monies to the State Department of Education to fund adult literacy programs in NYS. These are the only state dollars Rikers Island has received in past years to support correctional education. However, NYC recently embarked on an innovative demonstration project designed to increase the literacy levels of NYC’s jail population. Through a \$1.7 million grant from the Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO), an initiative designed to address the roots of poverty and help NYC residents become more self-sufficient, the NYC Department of Correction now pays the same wage to individuals in jail who wish to enroll in an education program as they would earn working in an institutional job.⁷ The demonstration project targets sentenced prisoners ages 16 and 17, but the funding can also be applied to any individual under the age of 24. Since the implementation of the project, program enrollment has increased approximately 50 percent. An evaluation is currently being conducted to determine if the rate of completion has improved as a result of the new incentive. If the program proves successful, program administrators may consider extending the eligible age limit.

⁶ Hours are awarded because most of the jail population is not incarcerated long enough to complete the certificates. Once back into the community, individuals can apply their hours towards a certificate.

⁷ Prior to the CEO grant, individuals who participated in educational programming were not provided with wages (unlike individuals working in an institutional job), which was seen as a disincentive for participation in education programming. The CEO funding also allowed for the hiring of additional educational staff.

Education and Individuals under Community Corrections Supervision

Unfortunately, very limited data are available on the education levels among the community corrections population. Moreover, like the data for jail populations, the available data on the community corrections population is quite dated. What we know about the participation of parolees in educational and vocational training programs is nearly 20 years old. Specifically, a survey of parole agencies published in 1991 reports that only one in six parole agencies required individuals under parole supervision to participate in educational or vocational training or engage in community service (Rhine, Smith, & Jackson).

From the data that is available, it appears that the education level of the state parole population increased between 1990 and 1999. Specifically, as indicated in Table 8, a smaller percentage was reported as having an 8th grade education or less – 16.8 percent to 11 percent – and a higher percent had obtained a high school diploma or GED – 29.6 percent to 42.2 percent. We know even less about the state probation population as the only data available provides education levels of the population in 1995. In comparing the education level of the probation population with the parole population, it appears as though the probation population, overall, has a higher education level than the parole population. For example, a higher percentage of the probation population – 17.7 percent – of the probation population has attended some college compared to 8.2 percent of the parole population in 1990 and seven percent of the population in 1999.

Table 8: Education Level of the Adult Community Correction Population (Percentages)

	State Parole		Probation
	1990	1999	1995
8 th grade or less	16.8	11.0	7.5
Some high school	45.4	39.8	34.9
High school graduate/GED	29.6	42.2	39.9
Some college or more	8.2	7.0	17.7

Sources: Hughes, Wilson, & Beck (2001) & Bonczar (1997)

Given the lack of data on this population, very few conclusions can be made at this time. Like the prison population, it appears that individuals under parole supervision are more educated than in previous years. However, this data is almost 10 years old and does not provide any indication as to the education level of individuals on parole since 1999. Because the majority of people under correctional supervision are serving probation or parolee sentences, it is of great importance to identify the education levels and needs of this huge segment of the correctional population.

Funding for Correctional Education

A 1985 report cited that the most frequent sources of funding for correctional education included Pell Grants, state incentive grants, and contractual measures between particular colleges or universities and individual Departments of Corrections (Wolford & Littlefield 1985). Despite massive policy and funding shifts in the last 10 to 15 years, the major sources of corrections education funding continue to be federal, state, and private contractual or sub-contractual relationships.

Federal Correctional Education Funding

The Federal government has provided financial assistance to state correctional education programs since the 1960s (Tolbert 2002). In 1964, the Economic Opportunity Act was passed; Title II B created the first federally funded ABE program entitled the Adult Basic Education Act (ABEA). The ABEA was designed for individuals who were 18 years of age or older, had not completed their secondary education, and whose inability to read, write, and compute would hinder their capacity to obtain or retain positions of employment. In 1998, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), Title II of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) replaced the ABEA and continues to be one of the largest federal sources of financial support for correctional education (Ibid).

In certain states, federal adult correctional education funding is also spent on programs for incarcerated adolescents and juveniles. Likewise, monies allocated for juveniles are on occasion used for adult populations. However, these latter expenditures are typically capped at the age of 25 years. Unfortunately, the Federal government does not disaggregate funding by populations; therefore, it is nearly impossible to determine the exact amount of Federal dollars spent on adult correctional education programs.

Adult Education Act/Workforce Investment Act/Adult Education and Family Literacy Act

WIA reformed federal employment, adult education, and vocational training programs. The Act was designed to establish integrated “one-stop” systems of workforce investment and educational training for adults and youth. Title II of WIA created the AEFLA. Chapter 2, Section 225 permits states to use WIA funds on correctional education. While the ABEA required that a *minimum* of 10 percent of funds be used for correctional education, WIA changed this to a *maximum* of 10 percent. WIA governs that 82.5 percent of WIA appropriations should be allocated for local provisions. Out of this portion of the appropriation, a maximum of 10 percent may be used to fund basic education, special education, English literacy classes, and secondary school programs for prisoners. Moreover, priority must be given to those individuals who are within five years of release. It is commonly cited that 10 percent of WIA funding to states may be spent on correctional education. However, due to the statutory language, only 8.25 percent of the total appropriation may be allocated to correctional education⁸ (Workforce Investment Act 1998).

In an unpublished report to Congress, the U.S. Department of Education provides 1997, 1999, and 2004 total appropriations and amounts spent on institutionalized programs. The average percent of the award expended on institutionalized programs decreased significantly between 1997 and 2004 (see Table 9). Prior to 1998, an average of almost 12 percent of the ABEA went toward supporting correctional education programming. In 2004, this figure was just over five percent.

⁸ Under the WIA provisions correctional institutions include prisons, jails, reformatories, work farms, detention centers, and community-based rehabilitation centers, including halfway houses.

Table 9: Total WIA Allocation, Amount Spent on Institutionalized Programs, and Average Percent Funding*

Year	Total Allocation (in \$)	Amount Spent on Institutionalized Programs (in \$)	Average Percentage Spent by Each State on Institutionalized Programs
1997	331,254,771	38,600,595	11.80
1999	354,742,216	27,011,666	6.51
2004	482,335,016	30,358,522	5.64

* Funding provided to Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, North Mariana Island, Palau, Micronesia, and Marshall Island have been removed from this analysis.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, unpublished report to Congress

Table 10 illustrates that prior to 1998 only four states expended less than 10 percent of their WIA allocation on institutionalized programs while two states spent over 20 percent. However, 1999 saw a dramatic reduction in correctional education spending as four states elected to not spend any of their allocation on institutionalized programs. In 2004, three states did not use any of their allocation to fund correctional education and only one state continued to spend over 10 percent of their allocation.

Table 10: Total WIA Allocation – Percent Spent on Institutionalized Programs

Year	Bottom 5 - State and Percentage Spent on Institutionalized Programs	Top 5 - State and Percentage Spent on Institutionalized Programs
	1997	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NJ (9.51%) 2. UT (9.82%) 3. ME (9.93%) 4. TX (9.98%) 5. 20 States* (10.00%)
1999	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 4 States - HA, IA, NV, NJ (0.00%) 2. DE (2.17%) 3. AZ (2.32%) 4. NH (2.34%) 5. KS (2.62%) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 47. MO (9.88%) 48. 2 States - NC & MD (10.00%) 49. CT (10.38%) 50. OK (11.29%) 51. PA (14.97%)
2004	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 3 States - DE, NV, VT (0%) 2. CT (0.99%) 3. IL (1.98%) 4. HA (2.00%) 5. WA (2.15%) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 47. MA (8.12%) 48. MI (8.24%) 49. 8 States** (8.25%) 50. NE (8.34%) 51. PA (14.47%)

Source: U.S. Department of Education, unpublished report to Congress

It is obvious from these data that most states will not choose to spend their Title II WIA dollars on correctional education unless they are mandated to do so. Not demonstrated in the above table is that 35 states spent less than eight percent of their awards on institutionalized programs in 2004. Moreover, 20 states spent less than five percent. The stark reduction of Adult Education award spending on correctional education is illustrated most dramatically by Delaware, which spent the largest proportion of their award in 1997 (22.23 percent), the second least in 1999 (2.32%), and nothing in 2004.

AEFLA also ties other potential correctional education funding streams to correctional education. For example AEFLA, in conjunction with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), requires that correctional institutions must provide educational services to prisoners who are under

the age of 22 years and also have disabilities. Moreover, AEFLA with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 mandates states to provide reasonable accommodations to all students, regardless of age, who have a disability. The Supreme Court has ruled that this also applies to state prisoners regardless of the cost or administrative difficulties this may pose (Tolbert 2002).

Vocational Education Act/Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1998, enacted on October 31, 1998, restructured and reformed the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act. The Perkins Act is federal legislation that grants over \$1 billion each year to support vocational-technical education training for “special populations” at the secondary and postsecondary levels. All postsecondary vocational and technical training activities that are supported through Perkins grants are mandatory partners in the one-stop system, established through WIA (U.S. Department of Education n.d.).

Under the Perkins Act, states must apply for funding through the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE). State workforce development boards (or State Boards for Vocational Education) apply for State Basic Grants by submitting a State Plan to the OVAE. The State Board then awards sub-grants to local education agencies, typically secondary schools and postsecondary institutions, using a proportion of funding established by federal formulaic appropriations for secondary and postsecondary schools. The postsecondary schools formula is based on the total of enrolled Pell Grant recipients and the proportion of Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) recipients (in comparison to the total number of BIA eligible recipients) in the state. Similarly, the funding formula for secondary schools is based on the proportion of Title I funds directed to local education agencies; the total number of students with special needs who have received individualized educational plans; and the total number of students enrolled in schools and programs operated by local education agencies (Ibid).

In FY 2006 the Basic Grants awarded to the 50 states and the District of Columbia totaled \$1.14 billion (U.S. Department of Education 2006).⁹ Prior to 1998, the Perkins Act required states to use a *minimum* of one percent of the funds toward correctional education programs. However, in 1998, the Perkins Act was amended and states can now spend *no more than* one percent of funds on correctional education (Spangenberg 2004). Tracking Perkins expenditures on correctional education is not possible at this point in time. The best figure that can be provided is the maximum amount that could have been allocated for correctional education in FY 2006. Under the one percent allocation formula, \$11,362,978 of the total Perkins appropriation to the 50 states and the District of Columbia could have been spent on correctional education.

Other Sources of Federal Support

Other types of Federal funding for correctional education primarily are geared toward serving juveniles and adolescents. These funding streams include the Workplace and Community Transition Training for Incarcerated Youth Offenders State grant, the Neglected and Delinquent Youth State grant, the Incarcerated Youth Offender grant (serves prisoners 25 years of age and under), and until 2006 the Office of Correctional Education (OCE) of the U.S. Department of Education operated the Life Skills for State and Local Prisoners grant (Tolbert 2002).

⁹ In FY 2006 Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands were awarded Perkins awards in the amount of \$2 million.

Pell Grants: A Case Study of the Elimination of Federal Funding

Perhaps the most notorious form of federal funding which is no longer available to prisoners is that of Pell Grants. The Higher Education Act, passed in 1965, provided student loans to any qualified student in the pursuit of postsecondary education,¹⁰ including prisoners.¹¹ However, Congress eliminated Pell Grant funding for prisoners with the passage of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994. Moreover, individuals who have been convicted of certain drug related offenses and are no longer incarcerated may also be ineligible for Pell Grants (Tolbert 2002).¹² Pell Grant exclusion for prisoners resulted in the closure of approximately half of the existing postsecondary correctional education programs (Taylor 2005). Despite the controversial nature of Pell Grant funding, the total cost to taxpayers appears to have been minimal. One report states that:

Although Pell [G]rants are budgeted each year...nobody in the 'real world' was ever denied funds because of prisoner grants. A fact sheet prepared by the Department of Education's Office of Correctional Education stated that of the \$5.3 billion in Pell grants awarded in 1993, only one-tenth of one percent was even awarded to people in prison, totaling \$34 million. This amount supported 27,000 students in prison and an annual average of \$1,300 per prisoner. Claims that money spent on prisoner education was taking away resources from non-prisoners were unfounded and discriminatory (Tyler, Walsch, & Dusenberry 2006, p. 17).

In the early 1990s a reported 772 on-site prison college programs operated in 1,287 correctional institutions in the United States (Taylor 2005). Ninety-two percent of correctional systems provided some sort of postsecondary educational opportunity to over 38,000 prisoners (Tewksbury, Erickson, & Taylor 2000). As a result of the passage of the 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, approximately 25,000 prisoners lost their access to Pell Grants, the primary support for their tuition and textbooks (Taylor 2005).¹³ In the first academic year after the passage of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, the number of prisoners enrolled in postsecondary correctional education programs fell to just 21,000 prisoner-students, a decrease of 44 percent (Tewksbury, Erickson, & Taylor 2000). Table 11 demonstrates the percent of correctional systems which reported offering postsecondary programming shortly before the enactment of the

¹⁰ Pell Grants originated from the following programs: BEOGs (Basic Opportunity Education Grants), the GI Bill, the EDP (Economic Development Program), the MDTA (Manpower Development and Training Act), and Vocational Rehabilitation (Ubah 2004). Title IV of the Higher Education Act specifically provided that these grants would be made available to prisoners (Ibid). In 1977 the grants were renamed Pell Grants, in honor of U.S. Senator Claiborne Pell's tireless efforts to prevent the elimination of the grants by conservative lawmakers (Ibid).

¹¹ Individuals who were on death row and those serving life sentences were statutorily prohibited from receiving Pell Grants.

¹² In addition to eliminating Pell Grants for prisoners, in 1998 Congress reauthorized the Higher Education Act, which prohibited individuals from receiving Federal student aid for one year after a first time conviction for possessing illegal drugs. With the second conviction the date of eligibility for Federal student aid was expanded to two years from the date of conviction. The third conviction provides indefinite exclusion from federal student aid (Tyler, Walsch, & Dusenberry 2006). The Government Accountability Office approximates that in the 2003-2004 academic year 41,000 students were denied Federal aid due to drug convictions (Ibid). In 2005, Congress amended this restriction with the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, which limited prohibition of student Federal aid to individuals who were convicted while enrolled in post secondary education and simultaneously receiving Federal student aid.

¹³ There is a slight variation in the estimates of the number of prisoner Pell Grant recipients, from 27,000 (Tyler, Walsch, & Busenberry 2006) to a more conservative estimate of 23,000 generated by the General Accounting Office (Kunen 1995).

Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, as well as in the three years following Pell Grant elimination.

Table 11: Percent of Correctional Systems Offering Postsecondary Correctional Education Programming (Percentage)

Type of Program	Academic Year		
	1994-95	1995-96	1997-98
PSCE programming	82.6	63.0	54.9
Certificate Programming	52.0	39.0	49.0
Associate Degrees	71.0	50.0	39.3
Baccalaureate Degrees	48.0	33.0	19.6
Graduate Degrees*	13.0	6.0	6.0

*Pell Grant funding is not available for graduate studies, however, as a primary supporter of undergraduate education, which typically serves as a prerequisite for graduate studies, the elimination of Pell Grant availability to prisoners impacted the availability of graduate degree offering programs as well.

Source: Tewksbury, Erickson, & Taylor (2000)

The number of prisoners enrolled in postsecondary programming since the passage of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act has actually increased. However, once this rate is held constant for the rise of the general prison population, it appears that the number of prisoners enrolled in postsecondary programming since the elimination of prisoner Pell Grants has decreased from 7.3 percent in 1994-95, to four percent in 1995-96, and 3.8 percent in 1997-98 (Tewksbury, Erickson, & Taylor 2000).

The elimination of Pell Grants for prisoners significantly altered the types of funding available to correctional education postsecondary programming. State correctional education directors have been forced to find other types of funding to maintain postsecondary education in their prisons. Table 12 highlights the types of funding utilized to fund postsecondary correctional education programs.

Table 12: Primary Sources of Funding for Postsecondary Correctional Education (Percentage)

Type of Funding	Academic Year	
	1995-96	1997-98
State version of Pell	15.9	2.1
Other State grants	18.2	27.1
Student's own money	43.2	27.1
Student's family	20.5	4.2
Perkins Grants/Federal funds	27.3	14.6
Private foundation grants/social organizations	34.1	31.3
General State funds	34.1	31.3
No funds/program	25.0	54.2

Source: Tewksbury, Erickson, & Taylor (2000)

In response to the elimination of Pell Grants, some states have developed new models in search of postsecondary correctional education programming revenue. Texas, for example, has enacted a system in which prisoners take out loans to fund their individual postsecondary correctional education training. Upon release, individuals are required to pay their loans back as a condition of their parole. Failure to pay their loans is considered a violation of parole (Messemer 2003). In another example, Kansas enacted a shared funding system, in which one-third of the postsecondary

costs are paid by private correctional industries, one-third of the expense is covered by prisoner wages as employees of the private industries, and one-third are covered by the training provider, Donnelly College. The college receives private donations that cover their portion of the expense (Taylor 2005).

Messemer (2003) found that certain types of funding sources were more likely to support specific types of postsecondary correctional education programming in the post Pell Grant era. State and federal funds were found to be equally supportive of certificate, Associate, Bachelor, and Master degree programs. However, private organizations, nonprofit foundations, and colleges/universities were found to be much more likely to only support Associate and Bachelor degree programs. Messemer also found that only one state was able to gain corporate support and two states able to secure foundational grants for their correctional Master degree programs. For a detailed overview of the funding streams utilized by four different states (New York, Texas, West Virginia, and Wisconsin) to provide postsecondary education to prisoners, see Schmidt (2002).

State Correctional Education Funding

Some state correctional education administrators have asserted that reductions in correctional education at the federal level have occurred as a result of politically motivated policy shifts, whereas reductions and changes at the state level emerge from a weakening economy and budget deficits (Spangenberg 2004). As a consequence, per prisoner expenditures have likely decreased as a function of the large increase in the overall correctional population coupled with budget deficits in many states (Ibid).

Due to differences in accounting among the states and different funding streams utilized by state systems, quantifying state expenditures on correctional education programs is difficult (Klein et al. 2004). Klein and colleagues have argued that accurate data regarding state or federal expenditures for correctional education do not exist.¹⁴ However, BJS data is able to identify total expenditures on correctional programming. In FY 1996 state prisons reported expenditures of \$1.2 million on prisoner programs including academic and vocational training, substance abuse education and treatment programs, religious activities, parenting, job search training, life skills programming, recreation and exercise, and other related activities. This equated to approximately six percent of the total U.S. prison operating expenditures. Broken down by prisoner, the program expenditures were \$1,196 per year or \$3.28 per day (Stephan 1999). The Bureau of Justice Statistics notes, however, that these expenditures are underreported. Further, the reporting on the activities listed varies greatly by each state. This prevented BJS from being able to make state-by-state comparisons. Moreover, approximately 25 percent of the states were not able to separate program spending from other general operating costs. One reason for a state's inability to accurately report these costs included expenditures incurred by other state agencies. This may have included a state's Department of Education partially defraying the costs of GED instructors as well as other academic or vocational training (Ibid). More recent data on these expenditures is not available, as no programming costs were included in the *2001 State Prison Expenditures* report (Stephan 2004).¹⁵

¹⁴ Klein and colleagues (2002) make several recommendations to overcome this issue: (1) correctional education programs should develop consistent definitions of coursework, (2) correctional education revenue sources should be identified across all state agencies, and (3) states should use institutional databases to track how funds are spent, using consistent purpose and object codes.

¹⁵ Some states offer information regarding the rate of spending on correctional education on Departmental websites. For example, Florida provides such information on the Department of Corrections' website. According to the 2005-06

Some correctional education administrators argue that significantly more funding is necessary for the operation and success of their programs (Spangenberg 2004). One study surveyed a sample of correctional education administrators in which representatives from Indiana, Maryland, New York, and Delaware reported no correctional education budget cuts or increases in funding. Oregon, prior to 2003, had experienced stable funding increases. After 2003, however, the correctional education budget experienced a massive cut of over 27 percent. A representative from Oklahoma reported a 30 percent cut in state correctional education funding but stated that an increase in federal dollars helped alleviate some of this reduction. The Kentucky representative reported that the state had almost lost its entire correctional education budget. The representative from Massachusetts detailed the impact of the WIA 10 percent rule change, stating that various state revenues were able to make up for some of this difference but the state still experienced a 20 percent or more reduction in correctional education aid. California,¹⁶ Texas, and South Carolina also reported major reductions, confounded especially in Texas by a large increase in its total prison population (Ibid).

Despite the rising correctional population, the percentage of education staff of all correctional employees has remained constant from 1995 to 2000. In 1995, all correctional facilities under state and federal authority (including community-based corrections) employed 347,320 full- and part-time employees, and educational staff comprised 11,020 (3.17 percent) of all employees. In 2000, of 430,033 employees in all correctional institutions, 13,688 (3.18 percent) were considered educational staff (Stephan & Karberg 2003). However, the educational staff ratio has declined since 1990, when four percent of all correctional staff were classified as educational employees (Klein et al. 2004). In terms of the ratio of educational staff members to prisoners, in 1995 there were 94.5 prisoners to every educational employee compared to 95.4 in 2000. While confinement facilities had a rate of 92.2 prisoners to educational employees in 1995 and 93.4 in 2000, in community-based facilities the ratio was much higher. In 1995, there were 390.5 community-based prisoners to every one educational employee. Although the rate of prisoners to educational employees in 2000 continued to be much higher than the rate in confinement facilities, the ratio significantly decreased. In 2000, there were 165.8 community-based prisoners to every educational employee (Stephan & Karberg 2003). The ratio of educational staff to prisoners has also declined from 1990, when the rate of educational staff to prisoners was 65.6 to one (Klein et al. 2004). However, the educational staff is likely underrepresented in these data, as volunteers are excluded (Stephan & Karberg 2003). Moreover, from these data it is not possible to distinguish part-time from full-time staff members, resulting in an imperfect ratio of prisoners to educational staff (Klein et al. 2004).

Types of state correctional education funding include monies from state legislatures, state Departments of Labor, state Departments of Education, and prisoner funds including inmate welfare funds and canteen proceeds. Over the last decade many state budgets have experienced

Agency Annual report, correctional education was listed as two percent of the total correctional budget, or \$1.03 of each prisoner's cost per day expense.

¹⁶ More recently, the Legislative Analyst's Office in the State of California released a report that discussed potential areas to expand California's correctional education system (Hill 2008). Approximately 54,000 prisoners – 31 percent of California's State correctional population – are enrolled in some type of correctional education programming (Ibid). However, the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation currently reports that approximately 26,000 – 15 percent of the prison population – prisoners are on waiting lists to participate in educational programming (Ibid). Moreover, the Department reportedly spent \$202 million of state funds and \$7 million of federal dollars on correctional education programming in FY 2006-07 (Ibid). According to these data, correctional education spending in California increased by approximately 40 percent in FY 2006-07 and is projected to increase by an additional \$18 million in 2007-08.

large deficits. The increase in correctional populations has deepened state's budgetary shortfalls and correctional education is frequently among the first programs cut. Without a consistent mechanism for monitoring and analyzing State correctional education budgets, the impact to correctional education is impossible to measure.

Private Correctional Education Funding

Correctional education programs have received some notable support from private foundations and donors. Similar to federal and state funding, data regarding grantmaking of these organizations is not collected in any centralized format. However, in order to maintain the governmental non-taxable 501(c)(3) status, nonprofits including charitable organizations, must file 990 tax forms with the Internal Revenue Service each year. Once filed these tax forms are available to the public and provide some insight as to the grantmaking in the area of correctional education.

The Foundation Center, a nonprofit organization, based in New York City, keeps electronic copies of 990 forms for all nonprofit organizations registered with the IRS. Unfortunately, the availability of these forms in an electronic format does not exist prior to 2002. The Foundation Center's database allows search terms to be conducted on all the 990s on file. Recently a search of the 990s was conducted for correctional education.¹⁷ Thirty-one 990 forms met the search criteria for correctional education.¹⁸ Because some grantmakers fund the same or similar projects in multiple years, several organizations were duplicative in the individual searches. Only 20 of the 990 forms represented unique organizations. Table 13 demonstrates the foundations that emerged through the search described above.¹⁹ On average, correctional education grants comprised a quarter of a percent (0.26 percent) of the foundations' total giving for that year. Given the low rate of funding and the small number of funders, it appears that correctional education is a very low priority for foundations.

¹⁷ In order to capture as many organizations as possible, the search terms "correctional education" and "prison education" were both used. One additional organization resulted in the correctional education search. The name of this organization is the American Negro Public Opinion Service (IL), which did not make any grants. However because of an appendix included in this organization's 990 filing that included the term correctional education, the organization came up in the query. Due to the fact that this organization did not make any grants it has been removed from the analysis.

¹⁸ One additional organization resulted in the correctional education search. The name of this organization is the American Negro Public Opinion Service, IL and they did not make any grants in the listed year. However because of an appendix included in this organization's 990 filing that included the term correctional education, the organization came up in the query. Due to the fact that this organization did not make any grants it has been removed from the analysis.

¹⁹ A careful examination of results from 990 searches and other foundational investigations must take place as some grants are in support of the arts, health education, international prisoner education, or the education of advocates working on prisoner-related issues. Without a thorough review, such grants could be seen as supporting U.S. correctional education programs. However, in these cases and many others, the support is actually designated for a different population.

Table 13: Search of Foundation Correctional Education Grants

Foundation Name	Year(s) of 990
American Chai Trust (NY)	2001, 2003
Atkinson Foundation (CA)	2005
Boorstein Family Fund (NY)	2003, 2004
Columbus Foundation and Affiliated Organizations, The (OH)	2003, 2005, 2006
Community Foundation Serving Richmond & Central Virginia, The (VA)	2002, 2003, 2004
Eucalyptus Foundation, The (CA)	2004
Fippingger Foundation, Grace J., Inc. (CT)	2002, 2003
Gilead Foundation	2006
Goldman Fund, Richard & Rhoda (CA)	2002, 2003
Heller Charitable and Education Fund (CA)	2004
Lisabeth Foundation, The (NY)	2004
Lutton Foundation, The (NY)	2003
Minneapolis Foundation	2005
Open Society Institute (NY)	2002
Rockridge Foundation, The (CA)	2002, 2003, 2004
Strawbridge Foundation of Pennsylvania II, Margaret Dorrance, Inc. (PA)	2005
Sunshine Lady Foundation, Inc., The (NC)	2004, 2005
van Loben Sels/RembeRock Foundation (CA)	2004, 2005

Source: Foundation Center 990 database

The Foundation Center also maintains a database of the top 1,000 grantmakers. While search terms “correctional education,” “prison education,” and “jail education” identified many of the organizations listed in Table 13, a few organizations were not represented in this initial query yet still provided funding for correctional education programs.²⁰

Several states have been incredibly successful at obtaining large commitments from private foundations. For example, in Oregon, a foundation by the name of New Directions has been reported as funding 26 percent of the State’s prisoners enrolled in college courses (Baust, McWilliams, Murray, & Schmidt n.d.). Moreover, in 1999, the Open Society Institute provided the State of Maryland with a grant in the amount of \$1.1 million to aid in the reinstatement of postsecondary correctional education (Ibid). Through this program, approximately 65 incarcerated individuals earned Associate of Arts degrees. With an additional \$1 million in state funds, Maryland had almost 500 prisoners, or just over two percent of the prisoner population, enrolled in postsecondary educational programs in Fiscal Year 2005.

The field of correctional education would greatly benefit from a consistent and reliable tracking of revenues and expenditures. Once a full picture of correctional education funding can be viewed, it will be clear if additional investments are warranted. The current lack of data may actually create confusion among policy makers and funders. A federal initiative requiring the tracking and reporting of correctional education expenditures and funding sources would greatly assist in furthering the pursuit of correctional education programming and funding.

²⁰ These organizations included the San Francisco Foundation, the Lynch Foundation, the New York Community Trust, the Edyth Bush Charitable Foundation, the Milwaukee Foundation, and the New York Women’s Foundation.

Conclusions – Limitations/Gaps in the Data

The goal of this paper has been to provide readers with an understanding of the state of correctional education in the United States. In many situations it is clear that not much is known about correctional education. This is especially true for community corrections populations, the jail population, and in areas of correctional education funding. On the other hand, recent surveys provide a fairly comprehensive picture of the education level of the prison population as well as the availability of and participation in education programs in state prisons. Similarly, much has been written on the effects of Pell Grant elimination for prisoners. In compiling the data presented in this paper, we have come to a number of conclusions about the status of correctional education in the United States and, in turn, have identified a number of gaps that need to be addressed by the research and policy communities.

First, the long history of correctional education implies that education is a well-accepted need, even requirement, for the correctional population. For over 200 years correctional education has continued to remain a priority of the public and the polity, even if at a minimal level. Therefore, the availability of correctional education warrants attention from correctional administrators, policy makers, and researchers. Moreover, legislative and statutory requirements have established mandatory correctional education in many jurisdictions. The mandatory nature of these programs requires that facilities have sufficient capacity to serve the now much larger than designed for correctional education population. It is imperative that we be able to identify that states are able to meet these mandates in providing required education to prisoners housed in their facilities. Tracking program availability will insure that states are held accountable for their mandates as well as allow the public to understand what types of educational programming is being offered to prisoners in each state. Unfortunately these data have not been collected in almost 10 years. It is essential that this information be available in a regular and timely manner.

Second, the NAAL and other large analyses of the educational levels of prisoners in the United States reveal many striking – and concerning – facts. Prisoners, in general, are less educated than the general adult population. However, individuals most impacted by the criminal justice system – Blacks and Hispanics – are increasingly scoring higher on literacy scales than their counterparts in the general population. This demonstrates that prisons and jails are perhaps becoming the primary schools for these populations. Further investigation into these findings is essential so that smart investments and policy recommendations can be made to decrease the reliance on the prison system to educate poor minorities.

Third, participation and completion rates are another essential piece of missing information. Without these data, it is impossible to understand the rates at which individuals receive an education while in prison. If not already required, correctional education programs should be mandated to provide these rates to the public and to funders, as these data would facilitate a better understanding of students' educational experiences and the factors which may impact their participation in and completion of correctional education programs. For example, facility transfers, lock downs, and other administrative factors may make it impossible to complete a correctional education course. However, many students are mandated to attend programming and thus participation and completion rates may be higher as a result. It is not clear whether participants of correctional education programs have completion rates that significantly vary from those of students in education programs in the community. In addition, evaluations assessing the impact of mandatory

correctional education programming should be conducted to assess if completion rates or other criminal justice outcomes significantly vary from non-mandated programs. This can be done by comparing data from jurisdictions that mandate education versus those that do not, though it would be particularly important to address by type of correctional system.

Fourth, the information collected on correctional education for the jail and community corrections populations is far from adequate. A representative assessment, similar to the NAAL, needs to be conducted in order to compare the prison and jail populations' educational levels as well as the jail population to the general adult population. Without this knowledge it is extremely difficult to ascertain what services are vital for individuals under community corrections supervision which represents the largest portion of the correctional population. Moreover, consistent participation, completion, and cost data are necessary as well.

Fifth, funding of correctional education is limited but data in this area seems to be even more scarce. More comprehensive cost information must be tracked, consistently between jurisdictions, in order to successfully advocate for education for this population. Moreover, understanding how correctional education is funded across jurisdictions will help aid states identify and develop strong and innovative funding streams.

A Senate Judiciary evaluation of correctional leaders reported that 93 percent were in strong support of offering educational and vocational opportunities in prisons (Tyler, Walsch, & Dusenberry 2006). In fact, some states are now looking at ways to provide more postsecondary opportunities to prisoners. In February of 2008, Utah's Senate Education Committee approved a bill that would fund postsecondary programming for individuals already enrolled in college (Fulton 2008). The bill would appropriate \$1.5 million and require prisoners to pay a portion of their tuition based on the wages they earn while working in prison (Ibid). However, selling correctional education and its associated costs is difficult when data are limited and inconsistent. One major impediment to the development of correctional education is the scarcity of reliable and consistent expenditures. Policymakers are hesitant to support programs that do not include price tags. Once the day-to-day costs of correctional education have been gathered and generalized, the benefits and implications for cost savings of correctional education will be much easier to generate.

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